DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 661 EC 305 106

TITLE	Virginia Quality Assurance Screening.
INSTITUTION	Virginia State Dept. for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Richmond.
PUB DATE	[94]
NOTE	16p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Deaf Interpreting; *Deafness; *Interpreters; Partial Hearing; *Qualifications; Quality Control; *Screening Tests; State Licensing Boards; *State Standards
IDENTIFIERS	*Virginia

ABSTRACT

Intended for individuals wishing to be qualified as Deaf Interpreters by the Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) program of the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, this monograph describes the program in question-and-answer format. It addresses the following topics: what the VQAS is; who administers the VQAS; the Directory of Qualified Interpreters; the legal definition of a qualified interpreter; the difference between certification and screening; the components of the VQAS screening; the difference between interpreting and transliterating; the assessment structure; diagnostic skills assessed in the performance assessment; criteria used for awarding a screening level; scoring of the written assessment; scoring of the performance assessment; receipt of assessment results; failure to receive a screening level; competency indications of the levels awarded; the VQAS and educational interpreters; evaluation of cued speech transliterators; fees and schedules; preparation for the VQAS assessment; and sources of additional information. Attached is a glossary of terms related to deaf interpreting. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 401 661

Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

VIRGINIA QUALITY ASSURANCE SCREENING

COORDINATED AND ADMINISTERED BY THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

EC305106

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S.W. Buckland
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is VQAS? 3

Who Administers the VQAS? 3

What is the "Directory of Qualified Interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing? 3

What is a Qualified Interpreter? 3

How Does Certification Compare With Screening? 4

What are the Components Assessed by the VQAS? 4

How Does Interpreting Differ From Transliterating? 5

How is the Assessment Structured? 5

What Kind of Diagnostic Skills will be Assessed During the Performance Assessment? 5

What is the Criteria Used for Awarding a Screening Level? 6

How is the Written Assessment Scored? 7

Why is Such a High Score Required on the Written Assessment? 7

How is the Performance Assessment Scored? 7

When Will I Receive the Results of My Assessment? 8

How Long Will the Results be Recognized? 8

What Happens If I Do Not Receive a Screening Level? 8

What Happens If I Do Receive a Screening Level? 9

What Do the Levels Mean in Terms of What I am Capable of Doing? 9

Is the VQAS Important for Educational Interpreters? 9

What About Cued Speech Transliterators? 9

Is There a Fee to Take the VQAS? 10

How are the Assessments Scheduled? 10

What is the Best Way to Prepare for the VQAS? 10

How Do I Apply to Take the Written or Performance Assessment? 11

Who Should I Call If I Have Any Other Questions? 11

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VIRGINIA QUALITY ASSURANCE SCREENING

WHAT IS VQAS?

The Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) is a diagnostic and proficiency screening designed to assess the knowledge, skills and abilities of interpreters and transliterators who use sign language or Cued Speech to facilitate the communication process between persons who are hearing and persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

WHO ADMINISTERS THE VQAS?

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) administers the VQAS in accordance with "Regulations Governing Interpreter Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing." VDDHH coordinates interpreting services throughout the Commonwealth and disseminates a "Directory of Qualified Interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing."

WHAT IS THE "DIRECTORY OF QUALIFIED INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING"?

The "Directory" is a listing of qualified interpreters which also contains important information about interpreting laws and services.

WHAT IS A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER?

Section 63.1-85.4:1 of the Code of Virginia states: "A qualified interpreter shall be one who holds at least one of the following credentials:

1. Certification from any national organization whose certification process has been recognized by the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; or
2. A current screening level awarded by the Virginia Quality Assurance Screening Program of the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; or
3. A screening level or recognized evaluation from any other state when (i) the credentials meet the minimum requirements of Virginia Quality Assurance Screening and (ii) the credentials are valid and current in the state issued."

BEST3COPY AVAILABLE

HOW DOES CERTIFICATION COMPARE WITH SCREENING?

Sign language interpreters throughout the country are often required to demonstrate interpreting skills by participating in a formal or informal certification or screening process. The certification process is generally a proficiency evaluation wherein minimum standards have been established to determine a specific level of competency. Interpreters may become certified on the national or state level, although only a few states offer certification at this time.

The screening process is generally a diagnostic assessment which may incorporate a proficiency assessment as one component. Numerous states and private organizations offer screenings to identify interpreter competencies and determine appropriate placement situations. The VQAS is a screening process, not a certification process.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS ASSESSED BY THE VQAS?

I. CODE OF ETHICS - WRITTEN ASSESSMENT

A set of at least fifty (50) questions are presented in multiple choice format to determine the candidate's knowledge of and ability to apply the tenets of the Code of Ethics to working situations. Practical, real-life situations, professional terminology, trends in the profession and cultural applications are incorporated.

II. PERFORMANCE - TRANSLITERATING and INTERPRETING

Given six five-minute videotaped scenarios, the candidate who uses sign language is assessed on ability to transliterate in three situations and interpret in three situations. (Cued Speech candidates participate in transliterating only.) Those situations are:

A. Expressive (Spoken English to Sign Language)
Example: A presentation to the Lion's Club

B. Receptive (Sign Language to Spoken English)
Example: A presentation to a local Boy Scout troop

C. Interactive - Function as the interpreter for a deaf and hearing person engaged in a conversation.
Example: A job interview

HOW DOES INTERPRETING DIFFER FROM TRANSLITERATING?

"Transliterate" means to convey messages without personal interjection between two or more parties using different forms of the same language, such as written or spoken English and a manually-coded form of English.

"Interpret" means to convey messages without personal interjection between two or more parties using two languages, such as a form of English to American Sign Language (ASL).

HOW IS THE ASSESSMENT STRUCTURED?

The VQAS is administered in two phases: the Written Assessment and the Performance Assessment. The candidate must demonstrate 90% competency on the Written Assessment to become eligible to participate in the Performance Assessment.

During the Performance Assessment, the candidate interprets and transliterates from videotapes to demonstrate receptive, expressive and interactive skills while being videotaped. Each performance is rated by at least one (1) rater who is deaf and one (1) rater who is hearing. Videotaped segments for the Performance Assessment are representative of deaf and hearing people in actual situations. The monologues are of people giving presentations to clubs, organizations or meetings. The dialogues for the interactive tapes are actual or simulated dyads based on real-life scenarios, such as a doctor's office, parent-teacher conference, or job interview.

WHAT KIND OF DIAGNOSTIC SKILLS WILL BE ASSESSED DURING THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT?

In addition to demonstrating an interpreter's ability to perform in the role of the interpreter and convey the content and meaning of the total message, the raters also identify specific competencies in the candidate's ability to sign, voice, and function as a professional interpreter. Some of the competencies that are assessed include:

I. Expressive Skills (Spoken English to Sign Language)

A. Clarity of signs
B. Accuracy of message
C. Accuracy and appropriateness of fingerspelling
D. Vocabulary
E. Consistency of sign system when transliterating
F. Appropriateness of mouth movements when transliterating
G. Spatial orientation when interpreting
H. Use of ASL structure and syntax when interpreting

II. Receptive Skills (Sign Language to Spoken English)

A. Clarity of speech
B. Appropriateness of intonation and inflection
C. English vocabulary and grammar
D. Appropriate use of processing time
E. Accuracy of the message
F. Ability to incorperate fingerspelled words
G. Smoothness of presentation
H. Ability to convey the speaker's affect

III. Interactive Skills (Simulated Interpreting/Transliterating Situations):

A. Expressive capabilities
B. Receptive capabilities
C. Ability to recover smoothly from errors
D. Ability to maintain a comfortable flow
E. Accuracy of message

WHAT IS THE CRITERIA USED FOR AWARDING A SCREENING LEVEL?

In accordance with "Regulations Governing Interpreter Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing," VDDHH awards a Level I, II, III or IV to any candidate who demonstrates the minimum competencies required to perform either interpreting or transliterating services. The percentages required to achieve a screening level are:

I. 90% competency on the Written Assessment

To help maximize professionalism among working interpreters, this must be demonstrated before a candidate is eligible to take the Performance Assessment, and

II. 50% - 100% on the Performance Assessment (Transliterating or Interpreting)

A screening level may be awarded for either skill area (transliterating or interpreting) depending upon the competencies demonstrated. Therefore, it is possible that a candidate could be awarded one level for interpreting and another level for transliterating. To demonstrate proficiency in the ability to convey the over-all content and meaning of the message, a screening level is awarded based on the minimum standard achieved in the lowest of the competencies assessed (receptive, expressive, or interactive). The standards are:

Level I:	50%	Level III:	80%
Level II:	65%	Level IV:	95%

HOW IS THE WRITTEN ASSESSMENT SCORED?

VDDHH personnel score written assessments at the time the assessment is administered. A second staff person re-scores each assessment to ensure accuracy of the results reported. The percentage of correct responses is computed, and questions answered incorrectly are correlated to the tenets of the Code of Ethics. Candidates are awarded an over-all percentage score, and an analysis of the tenets needing to be addressed to further enhance professional development is provided to each candidate.

WHY IS SUCH A HIGH SCORE REQUIRED ON THE WRITTEN ASSESSMENT?

An interpreter who has been awarded a screening level is considered to be a professional capable of performing in an ethical manner. Regardless of skill level, the interpreter is expected to abide by guidelines established by the Code of Ethics at all times. By demonstrating 90% competency on this portion of the assessment, an interpreter has demonstrated a thorough working knowledge of professional ethics and assumes full responsibility for interpreting situations.

HOW IS THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SCORED?

The Performance Assessment is scored in two parts: diagnostic and proficiency. For the diagnostic analysis, the trained raters assess specific competencies and skills demonstrated during each performance segment, identify areas of strength and developmental need, and offer suggestions for improvement in specific skill areas. These comments and suggestions are submitted to VDDHH where a diagnostic summary is prepared and sent to each candidate.

The proficiency score is based upon the information actually conveyed during the interpreting and transliterating performances. Each rater identifies key components of the message that are accurately conveyed. They also note information deleted from the message, inappropriately added to the message, or inaccurately conveyed.

Each rater assigns a percentage score to each of the three transliterating categories and to each of the three interpreting categories (i.e., expressive, interactive and receptive). The score sheets are submitted to VDDHH for final tabulation. VDDHH is responsible for tabulating the scores and awarding the appropriate screening level. The candidate must demonstrate at least the minimum competency for each performance category to qualify for a screening level.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Example: Candidate A takes the Performance Assessment and receives the following scores from each rater:

Rater:	Expressive	Receptive	Interactive
1	98%T 80%I	84%T 70%I	90%T 76%I
2	90%T 84%I	89%T 72%I	94%T 83%I
3	90%T 85%I	80%T 76%I	85%T 81%I
Average	95%T 83%I	84%T* 73%I*	90%T 80%I

Results for Candidate A:

Level III - Transliterating* Level II - Interpreting*

* Indicates the lowest scores awarded for Interpreting and Transliterating.

WHEN WILL I RECEIVE THE RESULTS OF MY ASSESSMENT?

In accordance with "Regulations Governing Interpreter Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing," candidates will be notified of the status of their results within 90 working days from the date the assessment was taken.

HOW LONG WILL THE RESULTS BE RECOGNIZED?

The results of any part of the assessment remain valid for three years.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT RECEIVE A SCREENING LEVEL?

There are many reasons why a candidate may not demonstrate the minimum competencies required to achieve a screening level on the day the Performance Assessment is taken. VDDHH recommends following the suggestions offered by the raters to enhance technical skills and professional demeanor before re-applying to take the Performance Assessment. Candidates who proceed to take the Performance Assessment have successfully completed the Written Assessment and are therefore considered to be knowledgeable about the profession. The second step, to demonstrate interpreting and transliterating competency in front of a video-camera, is often a new experience which requires not only skill, but composure. Candidates have up to three years from the date the Written Assessment was completed successfully to re-take the Performance Assessment and should do so when they feel they have improved sufficiently to demonstrate the minimum competencies to achieve a screening level.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO RECEIVE A SCREENING LEVEL?

Candidates who receive a screening level are qualified to perform interpreting services and are given information about contracting with VDDHH to provide such services in the Commonwealth, as well as the opportunity to be listed in the statewide "Directory of Qualified Interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing." Screening levels will be recognized for three (3) years from the date the level was awarded.

WHAT DO THE LEVELS MEAN IN TERMS OF WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF DOING?

Although it is not possible to list all of the types of situations a qualified interpreter might be asked to perform, some general guidelines should be considered before accepting an assignment:

1. The types of skills demonstrated should always be compatible with the communication modality of the consumer(s). For example, a Level II Transliterator should not interpret for a consumer who depends on ASL.

2. The interpreter should recognize his/her own skills and abilities with regard to demonstrated skill level and realm of experience. For example, a Level II Interpreter/Transliterator should not interpret in court situations.

Additional information listing the types of assignments most appropriate to the skill level as demonstrated on the day assessed is given to candidates who receive a screening level and is provided in the "Directory."

IS THE VQAS IMPORTANT FOR EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETERS?

Yes, "Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Handicapped Children and Youth in Virginia" became effective July 1, 1990. In response to a federal mandate requiring personnel serving students with special needs to obtain the highest minimum standard available in the state. Additional information about trends and issues in educational interpreting is available by contacting the Interpreter Programs Manager at VDDHH or by contacting the Associate of Hearing Impaired Programs at the Department of Education: Toll-free (800) 292-3820 V; Richmond area (804) 225-2363 V/TTP.

WHAT ABOUT CUED SPEECH TRANSLITERATORS?

Cued Speech Transliterators may be evaluated by the National Cued Speech Association or screened by VDDHH in a separate assessment designed specifically to assess cueing

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

skills. You may contact VDDHH for additional information regarding the Cued Speech Assessment.

IS THERE A FEE TO TAKE THE VQAS?

There is a registration fee of $20.00 for the Written Assessment and $80.00 for the Performance Assessment. Candidates must submit the enclosed registration form and fee at least three weeks prior to the scheduled assessment date unless otherwise authorized.

HOW ARE THE ASSESSMENTS SCHEDULED?

VDDHH schedules Written and Performance Assessments monthly in the Richmond office and upon request at various locations throughout the state. The sites selected are determined by the number of candidates waiting to take the screening in a particular area and the availability of a suitable location. When the number of candidates that can be served is limited, VDDHH assigns candidates in the order the registration forms are received. Candidates are encouraged to wait at least six months before re-taking any part of the assessment.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR THE VQAS?

Interacting with the deaf community and other interpreting professionals is generally the best way to gain the knowledge and experience necessary to become a proficient interpreter. However, reading, attending professional seminars, and viewing videotapes can also be beneficial. The following suggestions are offered to help you become better prepared to take the VQAS:

1. Know and be able to apply the principles of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Ethics (copy enclosed).

2. Join national, state and local professional organizations, such as RID, Virginia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (VRID), or Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD). (Current information enclosed.)

3. Attend workshops and other training seminars for interpreters. (Current listing enclosed and available by contacting VDDHH.)

4. Interact with members of the deaf community.

5. Read current information in the field and practice with a variety of videotapes. VDDHH offers a variety of reading materials and videotapes through its loan-by-mail library program for Virginia residents. (Current listings of interpreter materials are enclosed.)

6. Strive to become more fluent in the English language by taking college courses, reading current literature, and developing vocabulary.

Note: RID offers a study guide to prepare for the national evaluation which may also be beneficial when preparing to take VQAS.

HOW DO I APPLY TO TAKE THE WRITTEN OR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT?

Candidates apply for an assessment by submitting the enclosed registration form to VDDHH. Candidates may register for the Performance Assessment once a score of at least ninety (90) percent is achieved on the Written Assessment. Registrations must be post-marked at least three weeks prior to the date of the assessment.

WHO SHOULD I CALL IF I HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

Virginia Department for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Washington Building Capitol Square
1100 Bank Street, 12th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219-3640

Toll Free: (800) 552-7917
Richmond Area: (804) 225-2570

Interpreter Programs (IP) Manager - General/Educational Information about Interpreting Programs

Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) Coordinator - VQAS for Sign Language and Cued Speech Interpreters/Transliterators

Interpreter Services Program (ISP) Coordinator - Interpreting Services and Directory of Qualified Interpreters

NOTE: This information is effective July 1, 1994 and is subject to change without notification.

EC-EYI

Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH)
Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS)
(Updated March 1996)

Dictionary of Terms

Ability to Convey Key Details - Major points of information that if omitted would skew the message.

Additions - Information presented by the candidate which is not given or inferred by the speaker. Information used to bridge or alleviate cultural and/or linguistic differences is appropriate; Information added at random or as an explanation is inappropriate.

Appearance - professional clothing which appropriately contrasts skin color. Also features such as appropriate jewelry, hair, glasses, make-up, etc.

Composure/Demeanor - The ability to present a calm, professional appearance. The ability to control personal reactions during the assessment.
Areas to assess include:
a) Posture
b) Sense of confidence
c) Appropriate eye contact
D) How a stressful situation is handled

Deletions - Information that is omitted from the presentation.

Error Recovery - The ability of the candidate to correctly revise or amend a previously incorrect interpretation in a timely and appropriate fashion. Please note that if no major errors are made, then no error recovery is needed and it is assumed that the candidate is competent in recovering from errors.

Fluency - The smooth and fluid flow of the communication expressed as a signed or voiced presentation by the candidate. A natural appearing/sounding presentation of the information. This is not a judge of extent of vocabulary.

Intent conveyed - To communicate the intent expressed by the speaker.

Language Mode or English Syntax or Structure - presentation of information in the target language (American Sign Language or English) using the appropriate features of that language. The candidate's score is assigned depending on the percentage of total interpreting/transliterating time which is spent correctly portraying the important features of the language mode, as well as a percentage of the important features that are portrayed.

Language Mode or English Syntax or Structure (Continued):

Expressive Transliterating

Important features include:

1) English grammatical structure, regardless of language mode (SEE, MCE, PSE, CASE, etc...);
2) Identifiable English representation of the speaker's words on the mouth of the candidate;
3) Conceptually accurate signs (whether initialized or not); and
4) Initialized signs should be of a well-known nature. Obscure initialized signs that could add confusion to the recognition of that sign should be discouraged. (Example: "M"-Doctor for "medical".)

Expressive Interpreting

Important features include:

1) A correct portrayal of ASL grammatical features and use of appropriate linguistical structures pertinent to ASL, including:
   a) questions at end;
   b) negations and assertions follow the concept;
   c) concrete objects signed and placed in space before abstract ideas (e.g. "Store me go" vs. "I go Store"); and
   d) demonstrates appropriate incorporation of classifiers (and spatial relationships).
2) Correct non-manual features, including:
   a) non-English mouthing;
   b) yes/no questions, wh-questions, rhetorical questions;
   c) adverbial information (carelessly, intently, etc...); and
   d) appropriate linguistical body shift.
3) Variety of sentence structures, including:
   a) conditionals (if/then);
   b) topic/comment;
   c) various questions; and
   d) time sequence.
4) Conceptually accurate signs, including metaphorical and idiomatic expressions.

Mannerisms - Movements or behaviors that are specific to an individual. This would include inappropriately repeated movements like readjusting glasses, fixing hair, saying "Umm", etc.

Mouth Movements - Mouth movements which are appropriate to the language mode being used. When Transliterating, Shadowing (a mouthed display of the speaker's words) of the source material is considered appropriate. When Interpreting, mouthing for fingerspelled words, and other appropriate non-manual features (puh, pah, cha, etc) is appropriate, but complete Shadowing of the source material is inappropriate.

Processing Time (lag time) - The amount of time which the candidate allows her/himself during the communication to comprehend intent before beginning to sign or speak.

Sign Clarity - Sign production and signing style that lead to increased comprehension. This category should be scored on a percentage basis.

Sign Space - Use of signing space to indicate ideas such as reference, location, directionality, comparison, time, action, etc.

Sign Utilization - Selection of signs which appropriately convey the intent of the speaker for the specified language.

Speaker Affect - To convey the speaker's mood, tone, and feeling through the appropriate use of vocabulary, non-manual markers, sign pace, rhythm, and/or vocal inflection and pacing.

Substitutions - A positive example of this would include information presented by the candidate which matches the intent of the speaker, rather than utilizing a conceptually inaccurate English "gloss" based on the speaker's actual wording. Inappropriate substitutions can be either signed or spoken information that skews the intended message.

Vocabulary Selection - The correct choice of spoken words, or produced signs that accurately represent the meaning and register of the speaker, including affect and emotion.

Voice intelligibility/clarity - Clear speech production and enunciation. Strong accents may effect this score.